Development of adventure tourism in HP

765. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to promote adventure and winter sport/ tourism in the Hill States to attract international tourists;

(b) whether any allocation of funds has been proposed to develop the desired infrastructure and facilities; and

(c) if so, what allocation has been made for Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Ministry of Tourism extends Central financial assistance to State Governments/Union Territories for the development of tourism including adventure and sports facilities on the basis of proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priorities.

Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 952.70 lakhs has been sanctioned for the tourism projects to the State Government of Himachal Pradesh during the first two years of the 10th Plan.

Renovation of historical tourist places

†766. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that loans from foreign countries have been received for renovation of historical tourist places in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of the historical tourist places for the renovation of which this amount will be utilised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Infrastructure development project along the Buddhist circuit in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar was carried out by undertaking loan assistance of 7.7 billion Japanese Yen from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan (now known as Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). The works undertaken were at Sarnath, Kushinagar, Piprahawa and Sravasti in Uttar Pradesh

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

and Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Rajgir and Vaishali in Bihar. The project was completed at a cost of Rs. 251.05 crores in December, 1998.

Loan assistance was availed from the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan (now known as Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for the Ajanta-Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project (Phase-I) in Maharashtra State. The Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund loan assistance was to the tune of 3745 million Japanese Yen. The project was completed at a cost of Rs. 127.50 crores in March, 2002. The places covered were Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra.

Japan Bank for International Cooperation has agreed in principle to provide loan assistance (Japanese Yen 7331 million) for Ajanta-Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project Phase-I I. The locations to be covered are Ajanta, Ellora, Pithalkhora, Aurangabad, Daulatabad, Patnadevi, Lonar, Nasik, Pune, Elephanta caves, Bhaja and Bedsa, Shivneri, Malshej, and Kolvan in Maharashtra.

Scrapping of service tax on travel agents

767. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:

SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received representations from hoteliers and travel agents for scrapping of 8 per cent service tax on travel agents; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Finance have not agreed to the request as reflected in the budget proposals announced on 8th July, 2004.